



# Salmonella

## Health Education Facts

*Salmonella is a bacterium found in contaminated foods, and grows when foods are improperly handled or prepared. After consuming contaminated foods, serious intestinal problems may result.*

### Symptoms and treatment

Symptoms include fever, cramps, nausea, and diarrhea but may vary depending on the individual and amounts of contamination. Young children, people with special health conditions, and senior citizens are more likely to experience severe symptoms with complications. A doctor or health care worker should determine if treatment is necessary.

### How is salmonella spread?

Salmonella bacteria are passed through the intestines of humans, mammals, and birds. Outbreaks of Salmonella have been traced to processed meats, undercooked poultry or poultry products, raw or lightly cooked foods containing egg or egg products (such as homemade ice cream), raw sausages, and unpasteurized milk and dairy products (including dried milk). Foods contaminated with rodent feces, or prepared with improperly cleaned utensils or work space, spread Salmonella infection. People with symptomatic Salmonella infection should not be handling foods.

### Prevention

Careful food handling is necessary in controlling Salmonella infection. The bacteria grow and survive at room temperature, so proper food temperatures should be maintained. Salmonella is not killed by freezing, but will not grow rapidly below 40°F. Thawing meats and other foods in the refrigerator or cooking them while they are still frozen will lessen the chance of Salmonella infection. Foods must be thoroughly cooked to kill the bacteria.

Utensils and surfaces should be carefully

washed and sanitized after uncooked foods are handled. Avoid cross contamination -- do not use the same utensils for raw foods and cooked foods without washing and sanitizing. Careful hand washing before preparing and handling food is important. Everyone should wash their hands after using the restroom and before eating. Hands should be washed immediately after handling diapers.

To avoid food borne illness:

- C Wash hands often, and keep your nails trimmed and clean.
- C Keep work areas clean and sanitary.
- C Do not use the same utensils for raw and cooked foods without thorough washing and sanitizing.
- C Thaw foods in the refrigerator, under running cold water, or as part of the cooking process.
- C Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- C Never let foods sit at room temperature for more than two hours.
- C Never consume raw eggs or raw egg products.
- C Cook poultry thoroughly.